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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 17th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 1 October 1991, at 3 p.m.

President:	Mr. SHIHABI	(Saudi Arabia)
later:	Mr. AL-KHUSSAIBY (Vice-President)	(Oman)

- Address by Mr. Robert Gabriel Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe

- General debate [9] (continued)

  Statements made by

  Mr. Ndolo Ayah (Kenya)
  Mr. Al-Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates)
  Mr. Ben Yahia (Tunisia)
  Mr. Tran Quang Co (Viet Nam)
  Mr. Al-Khater (Qatar)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. ROBERT GABRIEL MUGABE, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

Mr. Robert Gabriel Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, His Excellency Mr. Robert Gabriel Mugabe, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President MUGABE: I should like to congratulate you, Sir, upon your election to the presidency of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. You have assumed the stewardship of a session that faces both complex challenges and unique opportunities for taking historic decisions. We wish you every success.

Mr. Guido de Marco of Malta presided over the first post-cold-war session of this Assembly last year. He guided the session to a successful conclusion and we thank him for his sterling efforts.

This year the United Nations has the pleasant task of recording its appreciation of the contributions of an extraordinary leader, Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar, pleasant because he has given us a decade of diplomacy that had helped bring many old conflicts to a resolution and created an atmosphere of hope for the relaxation of the few tensions that remain. Mr. de Cuellar deserves the accolades of both nations and families, for it can be said in all truth that his efforts have helped open discussions on issues that had held nations hostage for a long time, and in a literal

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sense he has had a part in delivering hostages back to their families. For all these achievements we must thank him wholeheartedly.

The current session has once again witnessed further gains for the principle of universality of the United Nations, as the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Baltic States of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea have assumed membership of the world body. We congratulate them and welcome them to our midst. At the same time, we express our expectation that the admission of the two parts of the Korean peninsula will promote constructive interaction between them and with other Member States and contribute to their shared goal of reunification. It is our sincere hope that shared membership of the United Nations will accelerate progress towards this mutually desired goal, and that the energies of this Organization will be employed in facilitating that process.

At the last session of this Assembly we all counted the blessings that the demise of the era of super-Power confrontation had brought. As we did so, some faint contours of a new international order that could succeed the cold war era were gradually becoming visible. Those who were bold enough to attempt to identify and define those contours found it prudent to punctuate their theses with many caveats. They were aware of how fragile the still evolving trends were, how easily the new gains could be reversed and how great the potential was for the re-emergence of the fears and mistrust that characterized the passing order. The events and experiences witnessed since the last session have demonstrated that the emerging international order cannot be left to evolve spontaneously. A conscious effort is required on the part of the international community to identify, reinforce and give permanence

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to the positive trends that the collapse of the cold war era yielded and to suppress all the negative aspects and risks that accompany this process of transformation. We believe that the present session should seriously begin the process of considering measures that can be taken to consolidate the positive aspects emerging from the still evolving transformation of international relations.

Our attention must remain focused on giving further impetus to the process of resolving regional conflicts and defusing focal points of tension around the globe. Major strides have recently been made in this area. We have today in our midst a united Cambodian delegation reflecting the progress made in consolidating the positive trends towards peace and stability in South-East Asia. We welcome the successful formation of the Supreme National Council, the legitimate body in which the unity, independence and sovereignty of Cambodia is to be embodied during the transitional period. The stage is now set for the early convening of the International Conference in Paris and for the United Nations to facilitate a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Cambodian question.

In Western Sahara, Central America and Cyprus, the patient and untiring efforts of Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar are yielding positive results. A cease-fire became effective in Western Sahara last month; we expect the Secretary-General's ongoing efforts in Cyprus to yield the desired result in the near future and believe that it will be possible to harness the good will of all parties involved to overcome all outstanding difficulties; and the process of national reconciliation in Central America is at an advanced stage.

(President Mugabe)

In southern Africa we are on a sure path to peace in Angola. We commend the diplomatic efforts that have led to the process that is now under way, with United Nations assistance, to bring to an end 16 years of war and to facilitate the attainment of national reconciliation among the Angolan people. The negotiations in Mozambique continue, albeit on a laborious path. In concert with others, Zimbabwe will continue to make its contribution towards the attainment of peace, stability and national reconciliation in that sister country.

The current session opened on a note of optimism on the Palestinian question and the wider Arab-Israeli conflict. The impasse on the Middle East peace process appears to have finally been broken. We welcome the diplomatic efforts that have opened up the prospects for launching a process of negotiation in that region, which has gained momentum, thanks to initiatives of the United States and the pragmatic approach of concerned parties in the region. We believe that the ultimate goal of that process should be a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement under which the Palestinian people will exercise their right to self-determination as envisaged in the pertinent United Nations resolutions.

In the same area, we applaud the efforts of the Government and the people of Lebanon towards the restoration of peace and stability in their country. The Security Council must assist the Government of Lebanon in extending its authority over all Lebanese territory. The continued occupation of southern Lebanon by Israel and Israel's refusal to comply with Security Council resolution 425 (1978) remain the major obstacles to the normalization of the situation in Lebanon.

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While there are some positive developments in the Middle East, that region still stands out as the major area in which acts of aggression and defiance of Security Council resolutions continue. The success of the current diplomatic efforts in the region and the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions will consolidate the positive trends that we expect to be a major element of the emerging new international order. Zimbabwe expects that the high standards applied by the Security Council in implementing its resolution pertaining to the Persian Gulf crisis should be adopted as the universal yardstick for all cases of aggression.

The measures taken to address the major threats to international peace and security since last year have demonstrated the ultimate validity of multilateral action within the framework of the United Nations. The prevailing international climate now permits the Security Council to carry out the functions envisaged for it in the Charter. However, as we have previously cautioned, the new partnership in the Council should not result in the body being used as a vehicle to promote and further only the interests of the powerful at the expense of those of the weak.

We are convinced that the time is ripe to implement the collective security arrangements based on the Charter of the United Nations. A number of important proposals have already been advanced on how this could be achieved. Zimbabwe attaches particular importance to the ideas offered by the Stockholm Initiative in the document entitled "Common Responsibility in the 1990s". We urge this Assembly to consider these proposals seriously. Also deserving of our attention is the proposal relating to the reactivation of the work of the Military Staff Committee of the Security Council and the possibility of assigning national military contingents to serve under the authority of the Security Council. It is imperative, in this regard, that rapid progress be

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made in instituting standing enforcement arrangements under the direct command of the United Nations, as this would affirm the principle of collective security.

Zimbabwe has always stated its commitment to the goal of general and complete disarmament as the cornerstone of a peaceful world. We therefore welcome the recent announcement by President George Bush on the decision by the United States to make significant cutbacks in tactical nuclear weapons. Coming hard on the heels of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - and receiving positive reactions from the Soviet Union, we view this development as a significant step towards a safer world, free from the spectre of nuclear annihilation, where vast resources formerly used for the arms race are channelled into development. We consider the imperative of a concerted effort to make the world a safer habitat to be one that deserves the fullest attention. We have, therefore, in line with the 1963 Declaration of the Organization of African Unity on Africa as a Nuclear Free Zone, signed instruments of accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and are in the process of lodging them with the depository Governments.

We also believe that the ideas offered by the Non-Aligned Movement in its Hague Declaration on the rule of law in inter-State relations would contribute tremendously to the consolidation of the positive elements that should be the building blocks for the emerging international order. Those ideas were well received by this Assembly when, at its forty-fourth session, it declared the 1990s a Decade of International Law. We expect the Assembly to follow this up and implement a programme of action that will establish the primacy of the rule of law in the emerging international order.

(President Mugabe)

We face the real risk of taking one step forward and another step backward in our efforts to achieve the desired new world order. The positive trends set by the progress made in the areas I have referred to cannot be sustained if remaining regional conflicts are not addressed and if we allow new ones to erupt. In Afghanistan, we only did half the job. We should now assist the people of that country to achieve national reconciliation so as to facilitate a lasting solution to the conflict. We must also move swiftly and focus on defusing potentially explosive situations created by the simmering tensions in the Horn of Africa, Liberia and Central Europe. We commend the role played by the respective regional mechanisms in addressing these trouble spots. In the emerging order, it is inevitable that such established principles governing inter-State relations as that of non-interference will have to accommodate efforts by the United Nations and regional organizations to restore stability and peace under unique circumstances, such as those in Liberia and Central Europe.

We in southern Africa continue to view with grave concern the volatile situation in South Africa. Although more of the legislation that created the apartheid system in South Africa was repealed this year, apartheid itself remains intact. Constitutional negotiations which are clearly imperative for the creation of a free, non-racial and democratic South Africa should now be launched. The process of dialogue established between President de Klerk and the anti-apartheid leaders, which had generated some optimism last year, has recently been threatened, indeed endangered, by the continuing violence in the country, as well as by some activities of the Government which have raised serious doubts about President de Klerk's good intentions.

(President Mugabe)

The recent developments in South Africa clearly demonstrate that the Government is not in a position to play the role of an impartial umpire during the constitutional negotiations as it had hitherto claimed. There are, undoubtedly, going to be extremely difficult moments on South Africa's journey to freedom.

(President Mugabe)

The critical question in South Africa is clearly not whether the apartheid laws remain on the statute books or not: it is that of the transformation of the country into a united, non-racial and democratic country in which all the people enjoy common and equal citizenship and nationality, and have the right to participate in the Government and administration of the country on the basis of universal and equal suffrage.

To that end, negotiations leading to the drawing up of a new Constitution are now the most urgent and pressing question. We urge the people of South Africa, and their political parties and organizations, to work towards the establishment of conditions conducive to speedy movement towards the adoption of a democratic constitution. In the meantime, the international community must, as called for in the Assembly's consensus Declaration on apartheid of December 1989, step up all-round support for the opponents of apartheid and ensure that all existing measures aimed at encouraging the South African Government to eradicate apartheid are maintained.

The issue of failure in economic development and poverty stands out as the central unresolved issue in these times of transformation. It is estimated that today more than 1 billion people, or one in every five human beings, live in utter poverty. The United Nations 1991 World Economic Survey reveals that in 1990 economic activity slowed down in all parts of the world, and forecasts point to zero growth for the world as a whole in 1991. The number of devastating natural disasters and emergencies multiplied throughout 1990 and during the first half of this year. The failure of the international community to mobilize and give as swift a response to these crises as was given to the international political crises that erupted during the same

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period clearly demonstrated a deficit in determination and practical commitment to address the problems of poverty and economic development through multilateral cooperation and dialogue.

Most vulnerable to the rigours that result from poverty and economic underdevelopment are the children of the world. We were gratified to see the international community focusing due attention on the plight of children at the World Summit for Children held here last year. In our view, concerted action to improve the welfare of children can be further consolidated by making the specialized agencies of the United Nations concerned with children better equipped to tackle the enormous problems that they face. To this end, we hope the international community can take the practical step of making more financial resources available to such agencies, possibly by convening an international donors conference for this purpose.

If the emerging new era is to be based on peace, justice, stability and relations of cooperation, international economic problems should be addressed through dialogue and negotiations between the developed and developing countries. The achievement of a consensus on the national and international actions needed to accelerate development in the 1990s, as set out in the International Development Strategy adopted by the Assembly last year, as well as in the Declaration of the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, had rekindled some hope that the spirit of dialogue and cooperation was also extending to international economic relations. However, the lack of a successful outcome to the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations at the end of 1990 dashed most of our hopes.

The developing countries have recognized that they have a responsibility to ensure a better future for themselves. In Africa, the Heads of State,

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meeting in Abuja last June, signed a Treaty establishing an African Economic Community. This was a landmark decision, the objective of which is to create opportunities for economic development through cooperation. However, it remains clear that the establishment of a favourable international economic environment is indispensable to the success of our efforts. We therefore call upon the developed countries to show the necessary cooperation and support for our efforts in addressing the acute problems facing the developing countries in the areas of protectionism in trade, commodity prices, external debt, transfer of resources, and transfer of technology. I should emphasize that our efforts to help ourselves are sure to fail should our products continue to encounter a wall of protectionist measures in the developed countries. We hope, therefore, that the Europe of 1992 and other emerging trading blocs will keep their doors open and will not be "trade fortresses".

In my own country, Zimbabwe, we have been acutely aware of the fact that fostering growth and development remains primarily a national responsibility and that emerging circumstances require us to gird ourselves for international competition. Zimbabwe is implementing an economic reform programme, the main components of which are trade liberalization; structural adjustment, including strict public expenditure control aimed at reducing the budget deficit; the decontrolling of prices and deregulation of the economy; and the creation of a domestic environment conducive to increased local and foreign investment, which should lead to an expansion of the economy and the generation of more employment opportunities for our people. This is an ambitious but realistic programme aimed at achieving sustainable economic growth, which enjoys the support of global financial and economic institutions. The programme requires some $16 billion over five years, of which $12 billion will come from within

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Zimbabwe itself, while $4 billion will be sought from external sources. In this regard, I take the opportunity to invite the international community to extend the necessary support for Zimbabwe's efforts to reinvigorate its economy.

We believe that this body, the United Nations, should play a central role in the management of international economic relations and in assisting the efforts of the developing countries to achieve sustained growth and development and to eradicate poverty. We are pleased to note that the Assembly has already begun seriously to address ways of ensuring that the United Nations is well equipped to be sufficiently responsive to the emerging needs and challenges that we face in the economic and social fields today. We welcome, as a starting-point, the adoption at the resumption of the last session of the General Assembly last May of a resolution which provides guidelines for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations system in the economic and social fields. This task is an urgent priority deserving of our full and concerted efforts.

In conclusion, let me express our hope that the political will exists to effect all the changes that are beneficial to the international community as a whole, and to our Organization in particular, so as to make our world the place we envision.

(President Mugabe)

The transition from the conflict-ridden paradigm of the past to a new one based on cooperation and interdependence is an imperative of our dispensation. We are indebted to the founders of this our Organization, who, with fewer material and intellectual resources than those at our disposal today, made a rich investment in peace and cooperation. We are indebted to our children who, with their hope, their optimism and their idealism, challenge the cynicism and avarice that have in the past threatened to fossilize our most cherished human values. Most significantly, perhaps, we are indebted to ourselves, for the currency with which the sad account in human suffering and deprivation can be settled is in our pockets today and our place in history depends on what we do now about that account. It is in our power to make it balance.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the General Assembly I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Robert Gabriel Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. NDOLO AYAH (Kenya): On behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, I extend to you our warmest congratulations on your election to preside over the deliberations of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session. You bring to the presidency a wealth of experience as an accomplished diplomat of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a country with which Kenya has very cordial relations. I wish to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation as you carry out the heavy responsibilities of your high office.

(Mr. Ndolo Ayah, Kenya)

I also take this opportunity to compliment your predecessor, the illustrious Foreign Minister of Malta, Mr. Guido de Marco, for the able manner in which he conducted the affairs of the last session, and for the many missions he undertook on behalf of the General Assembly to convey to the international community the important decisions of the forty-fifth session.

To the Secretary-General we express our appreciation for the excellent services which he and his dedicated staff continue to render to the Organization and to the international community. His tireless efforts in the search for international peace and an equitable international order, in which all United Nations Member States, large or small, play an equally important role, have placed him among the truly great statesmen of our time.

Two weeks ago seven new Members were admitted into the Organization - the largest single admission in recent years. On behalf of the Government and people of Kenya, I take this opportunity sincerely to congratulate the Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, and the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on becoming Members of the United Nations. With their membership, the United Nations has moved closer to the realization of the principle of universality. The road to nationhood has been long and, for some, rough, but nevertheless a worthy journey.

We laud the new spirit of reconciliation which is emerging and which now underlines the relationship between some of the new Member States and their former adversaries. With the simultaneous entry into the United Nations of the two Koreas, a new chapter has opened which, we hope, will characterize their peace talks aimed at national unity.

(Mr. Ndolo Ayah, Kenya)

The current session of the General Assembly offers yet another opportunity to reflect on the dramatic developments that have taken place in the world in recent years. As in the past, the international community is looking to the United Nations for leadership in the search for the maintenance of international peace and stability.

Six months have passed since the coalition forces mounted a successful operation which restored sovereignty to the people of the State of Kuwait. Never before has our Organization shown such unity of purpose and resolute determination to put an end to naked aggression by a powerful neighbour against a tiny and helpless Member State. Kenya fully supported all the Security Council resolutions on the Iraq-Kuwait crisis, basing its support on the principle of the inadmissibility of acquisition of territories by use of force and the principle that wanton aggression must not go unpunished.

Several important lessons have emerged from the Iraq invasion of Kuwait, one of which is that those who ought to know better were complacent and, indeed, appear to have conspired to place deadly weapons, capable of mass destruction, into the hands of a nation in one of the most volatile regions of the world. For several years Kenya joined other delegations from developing countries in censuring certain developed nations which are also major arms manufacturers and exporters for their silence on questionable arms deals. Since such weapons were never intended for attacks on the suppliers, we had no illusions at all regarding their end use.

(Mr. Ndolo Ayah, Kenya)

The time has come for these merchants of weapons of mass destruction and death, be they Governments or private companies in Member States, to put aside greed, profit and naked exploitation, and join the United Nations in calling for a world-wide ban on all chemical weapons and the limitation of trade in arms or greater transparency in their transfers by keeping a register of arms sales.

We still hear the sounds of drums of war six months after the end of the operations in the Gulf and what we thought was the beginning of full compliance with all Security Council resolutions. We want to express the sincere hope that sanity and better judgement will prevail over short-sighted, parochial and chauvinistic interests, and thus save humanity from the kind of costly misadventure that nearly plunged this generation into yet another world war.

Within the same region, the situation in the Middle East remains tense and fragile. Several resolutions that the United Nations has adopted in the past, aimed at reducing tension and laying the foundation for lasting peace in the Middle East, remain largely unimplemented. The right of Palestinians to a home of their own, as well as the right of the State of Israel to exist, cannot be compromised, nor indeed can the right of all States in that troubled region to live in secure and internationally recognized boundaries.

Several serious attempts have been made, including the current efforts and initiatives of the United States Secretary of State, James Baker, to reduce tension in the Middle East and create an atmosphere conducive to negotiations. We support these efforts as we have in the past, and it is our hope and prayer that they will meet with success.

(Mr. Ndolo Ayah, Kenya)

Kenya believes, as do the majority of Member States, that at the root of the Middle East problem is the question of an equitable and just settlement of the Palestinian issue. Any solution that excludes representation of the Palestinians by those of their own choice is no solution, and will only prolong the misery and agony that have characterized the situation in the region.

The need for an international conference on the Middle East, attended by the five permanent members of the Security Council and all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, has become more urgent. It is one sure way of arriving at lasting solutions, which should be guaranteed by the United Nations in accordance with its mandate.

Some of the most far-reaching changes in recent times have taken place in a relatively short span of time. These are changes which, as the Secretary-General has observed, are characterized by both the aspects of hope and the countenance of dangerous unrestraint. Their central theme is the democratization of human societies everywhere.

Several speakers who have preceded me have eloquently articulated the problems and the prospects, pointing also to inherent dangers, particularly the assumption that there are those who possess a monopoly on truth and on knowledge of what is good for the rest of humanity and what constitutes good governance.

There is no country on Earth, indeed no government, in these times and age that can survive unless it protects and strictly upholds the fundamental rights of its citizens. Consequently, the argument is not against the imperative need to observe human rights, good governance, accountability, elimination of corruption and the fight against ethnic antagonism, wherever

(Mr. Ndolo Ayah, Kenya)

these social evils exist in our societies. Rather, the argument is about differing interpretations of what constitutes good governance, as well as the authoritarian assertion that if we differ then we must be wrong. In other words, we are being told that we are wrong because our critics are right, and that they are right because they say so.

The changes that started in Eastern Europe a few years ago are not necessarily out of the reach of many developing countries. Indeed, most of them were not necessary in the developing countries. Very few minor adjustments here and there are required, because the problems are not the same in the first place. What the developing nations need, more than anything else, is for existing social and economic institutions to be strengthened as a means to create stability for political structures.

We are encouraged by statements made by the representatives of the developed North which took cognizance of the need to strengthen democracies in the developing South, not by preaching moral virtues that may be totally alien to the cultural values and aspirations of the developing countries, but by taking concrete measures aimed at raising the living standards in those countries.

The world has shrunk into a small global village. We live in an age of electronic media and satellite communication systems. Events in one corner of the world, however remote, are instantly beamed into our homes, as we witnessed during the Gulf crisis. Under the circumstances, it is neither impossible nor difficult, in an age of instant global television, to detect and promptly react to problems as they arise. Natural disasters and calamities, massive transfers or movements of conventional weapons or instances of flagrant abuses of human rights can no longer go without detection.

(Mr. Ndolo Ayah, Kenya)

The new international order, for which we all yearn, cannot be the responsibility of any one particular country. Rather, it is the collective responsibility of all of us. The role of the United Nations, as the Gulf crisis recently demonstrated, is a crucial one, and can be successfully played only through the concerted action of all its Members.

The General Assembly met in a special session five years ago to consider ways of supporting African efforts to alleviate the severe crisis that has gripped the continent and to lay the foundation for the continent's sustained economic and social development. The Assembly unanimously adopted the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, representing a unique agreement between African States and the international community, in which both sides committed themselves to serious and far-reaching efforts to accelerate Africa's development process. The Programme, which created major expectations for better prospects for Africa, came to an end in July this year. This session of the General Assembly will carry out the final review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme and make recommendations.

Nevertheless, over the five years of the period of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, the economic and social conditions in the continent have actually worsened. This has occurred despite the many far-reaching measures and reforms undertaken by African countries under extremely adverse external conditions of deteriorating commodity prices, heavy external debt and rising net outflows of financial resources. This session of the Assembly therefore has the responsibility to come out with a clearly defined, action-oriented agreement on international support for the continued efforts of African countries during the 1990s.

(Mr. Ndolo Ayah, Kenya)

The international community and the African countries should renew their commitment to a new agenda of cooperation for Africa's sustained social and economic development in the 1990s. To achieve this goal, urgent action is needed to accelerate economic growth to an average real growth rate of at least 6 per cent per annum of gross national product throughout the period of the new agenda, with the aim of increasing income and eradicating proverty.

If we fail to observe these guidelines, the new international order will have absolutely no meaning or relevance to the vast majority of the so-called third-world countries, some of whose citizens subsist on less than one dollar a day and whose countries are denied free access to the markets of the developed world through a series of restrictive and protectionist policies.

The beginning of this decade saw the reaffirmation of the supremacy of international law in the conduct of inter-State relations. One of the major causes of conflicts between nations throughout history has been failure to observe the basic principles of international law, one of whose cardinal provisions is the respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other States and their right to control their destinies.

(Mr. Ndolo Ayah, Kenya)

It is therefore most fitting that we should be witnessing an increasing awareness of the need for respect for international law at the beginning of this decade, which the General Assembly has declared as the United Nations Decade of International Law. It is my delegation's hope that the declaration will invoke greater respect for international law and create a favourable atmosphere for implementation of the principle that all international disputes should be settled peacefully and through negotiation. This is one sure way of transforming the consensus expressed at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly into specific activities in order to translate the ambitious programmes of the decade into reality.

Similarly, the end of 1970s and the beginning of 1980s witnessed a monumental step forward in the development and codification of one aspect of international law. I refer to the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. This most important Convention, which has been aptly described as a constitution for the oceans, was primarily to facilitate international cooperation and to promote the peaceful use of the seas and oceans, as well as the equitable and efficient utilization of ocean resources.

We note with great concern and regret, however, that the preparatory commission has begun to wind up its work without the broad acceptance that would allow for consistent and uniform application of the Convention. The Convention represents many years of negotiations, which successfully established a delicate balance on issues of global concern, and whose future is now left doubtful.

It is my delegation's hope that the Secretary-General will find wide support for his current efforts to bridge the gap between divergent views.

(Mr. Ndolo Ayah, Kenya)

Otherwise we shall run the risk of returning to the very uncertainties and instabilities that the Convention on the Law of the Sea was created to address.

Serious human trauma and tragedy still face the Horn of Africa - an area that, for decades, has witnessed numerous political and social upheavals, resulting in massive suffering of the worst kind ever witnessed in the region. The larger part of the region is on the brink of unprecedented famine. My delegation wishes to bring this matter to the attention of the world community as a matter of urgency. I refer in particular to the plight of the many thousands of women and children who are dying from the lack of basic life-supporting necessities.

In the past my country has exerted maximum efforts to deal with the situation arising from the traffic of refugees seeking temporary relief, with assistance from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other donor agencies. This time, however, the dimension and complexity of the problem of refugees in Kenya are far beyond the resources at our disposal. This is especially so because of the number of refugees involved - now more than 200,000 - and the fact that our economy, which is currently under a strenuous structural-adjustment process, is struggling to recover from the effects of the Gulf war, which had a serious effect on our tourist industry.

The situation calls for urgent assistance from the international community. I refer in particular to food, medicine, shelter, transport, clothing and other necessities. My President - Mr. Daniel Arap Moi - has already made a passionate plea to the international community for urgent assistance, not only for the refugees in our country but also for those

(Mr. Ndolo Ayah, Kenya)

displaced in the Sudan and Somalia, who are facing massive starvation and death.

Allow me, on behalf of the Government and people of Kenya, to convey our sincere thanks to those Governments and international agencies, as well as non-governmental agencies, that have come to the aid of the refugees in Kenya, and appeal for their continued assistance and valuable support for this worthy humanitarian cause.

In this regard, I wish to record the support of my delegation for the proposal made by various delegations - particularly those of the United Kingdom and of Norway, to mention only a few - that a mechanism be put in place to deal more promptly and effectively with such crises. Kenya has cooperated with various United Nations relief agencies and with governmental and non-governmental organizations involved in relief work and in the provision of assistance to neighbouring States. We hope to continue this cooperation in the years to come, in the service of humanity.

The importance and urgency of taking appropriate measures to protect the environment from further damage and to preserve it for future generations is a subject of global concern. The preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, scheduled to take place in Brazil in 1992, concluded its third phase in Geneva last month with the warning that a lot of ground remains to be covered before Rio de Janeiro. Kenya hopes that at the fourth and final session, scheduled to take place in New York in March 1992, the remaining issues will be ironed out, and the gap bridged, so that the success of our Conference may be ensured.

The very survival of the human race in the years to come will depend increasingly on the ability of man to co-exist in harmony within his

(Mr. Ndolo Ayah, Kenya)

environment. All nations - rich and poor, big and not so big - have a stake in this. The poor, non-industrialized nations must reconcile their development with their environment, just as the rich, developed countries, in the disposal of their industrial wastes, must pay great attention to the problems of preserving a sound environment. Because a good environment is incompatible with poverty, action on environmental control and protection must be addressed simultaneously with the development needs of the poor and developing nations.

The Commission on Human Settlements, at its thirteenth session, is recommending to the General Assembly the adoption, at this session, of a draft resolution for the convening of a world conference on human settlements, and is requesting the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT), to take the necessary steps.

My delegation supports this proposal, which would offer a unique opportunity to evaluate and strengthen the progress of HABITAT, bearing in mind the fact that urbanization is becoming a major environmental problem in many developing countries.

Allow me, before concluding my remarks, to refer to recent developments and changes in South Africa. The leadership in that Republic has demonstrated commitment to the dismantling of the obnoxious policies of apartheid. My delegation believes that the international community - the United Nations in particular - should continue to play the same constructive role that it has played in the past in bringing about the dismantling of apartheid. Although a lot remains to be done, it is the view of my delegation that this Organization ought to take cognizance of the positive changes in the Republic of South Africa and lend its moral support for continued peaceful change.

(Mr. Ndolo Ayah, Kenya)

Let clear and unmistakable signals go to the racist die-hards of the AWB clique, however, that, in this era of fundamental changes, the international community will not tolerate any attempts to put the clock back, that there will be no place to run to for solace and comfort should they insist on pursuing the short-sighted and outdated policy of racial supremacy.

Nothing could constitute a more gross abuse of human rights than giving comfort to a few die-hard racists who believe that they are destined by God to be a superior race.

Mr. AL-NUAIMI (United Arab Emirates) (interpretation from Arabic): Mr. President, my country's delegation is proud to see you presiding over the current session of the General Assembly at a time when there is a pressing need for wisdom, skill and experience for which you have been known throughout your long diplomatic career. You represent Saudi Arabia, a country with which we are bound by ties of brotherhood, neighbourhood and common destiny and with which we share values of history, heritage, and the lofty principles of Islam. We are confident that you will conduct the work of this session with the competence and objectivity to which all Members of the Organization are looking forward at this crucial juncture in history.

We commend the role played by the Foreign Minister of Malta, particularly his untiring endeavours to reform the organizational structure of the General Assembly during his presidency of the forty-fifth session. We hope that the efforts he exerted will continue.

After 10 years of service in this prominent international post, during which the United Nations has witnessed momentous events, the world must feel proud of the role played by the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar. His dedication to the purposes and principles of the Charter and his continued efforts for peace have placed the United Nations at the centre of world events as an effective forum with moral and political weight.

This session convenes in the wake of a series of events which followed upon the heels of each other, and which led to radical changes in the ideological and political maps of many countries of the world. Some of those events, indeed most of them, took place suddenly and at a rapid pace, and as such, as the Secretary-General said in his annual report on the work of the Organization, they mark "a great turning point in history". (A/46/1, p. 2)

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

One of the most significant of those events was the disappearance of the system of polarization associated with the cold war that plagued the world order since the inception of the United Nations. That polarization led at times to the brink of confrontation between the two super-Powers.

The ending of that polarization brought to an end the cold war with its military alliances and a policy of nuclear deterrence which was fraught with the risk of the mass annihilation of our globe.

The changes in the ideological and political map of some countries of the world have been accompanied by, and resulted in, similar drastic changes in the relationships between the major Powers themselves as well as in their method of dealing with the existing hotbeds of conflict in many countries. Their approach is now based on cooperation rather than confrontation, on resolving regional conflicts rather than on fanning their flames, and on ending disputes rather than broadening their range. It is cooperation aimed at establishing international peace and security, and an alliance whose purpose is the repulsion of aggression and respect for the rights of countries to sovereignty and independence.

It was only natural that such positive developments should be reflected in the United Nations itself and the role entrusted to it. In this context, my country has supported the active role undertaken by the world Organization during the last two years in combating acts of aggression and in implementing the wide-ranging peace plans in many regions and countries. That role was a natural product of the new changes on the international scene and it corresponds fully with the mandate originally entrusted to the international Organization. It is the role that the United Nations should have played, had it not been for the cold war circumstances which precluded it.

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

While we welcome those positive changes, we in the United Arab Emirates hope that excessive optimism will not make us forget or overlook the basic facts, namely that the world is still replete with hotbeds of tension that could erupt at any moment.

The new world order faced immediate challenges and hard tests, foremost among which was the Iraqi aggression against the State of Kuwait, as well as other events that have occurred in other areas of the world in the course of the past year. Those events serve as a reminder of the imperative to apply and adhere to international legality, particularly to implement fully Security Council resolutions on all issues without any discrimination between one problem or the other. It is imperative to address the hotbeds of tension and to confront them with promptness and effectiveness.

We seize this opportunity to extend our congratulations to the Government and people of the sisterly State of Kuwait on recovering its sovereignty and dislodging the occupiers of its land. We also congratulate the countries of the world on their solidarity and cooperation which played a major role in overcoming aggression and standing firm against the injustice meted out by the aggressor. We thank all the countries that participated with us materially, politically and morally in liberating Kuwait and ending aggression against the countries of the region.

This year's admission of seven countries to membership in the world Organization is a vivid expression of the success and progress the world has attained in its pursuit of peace. We avail ourselves of this opportunity to welcome the Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Marshall Islands and Micronesia. We also extend special congratulations to Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania on regaining their independence and on their

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

accession to the membership of this Organization. My delegation will be happy to cooperate with them bilaterally and multilaterally in achieving the objectives of the Charter.

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

The crisis of the Iraqi aggression against, and occupation of Kuwait ended with Kuwait's restoration of its sovereignty. However, the lessons drawn from that crisis will remain on the record of the political history of our region, which has always sought peace and stability. Our position in respect of that crisis was to uphold the rule of law, right and justice as well as standing by the inalienable right to self-defence against injustice and aggression.

The Iraqi regime miscalculated events and was driven by grudge, greed and aggression. Together with other countries, we tried to spare the region, and the people and land of Iraq, the calamities and consequences of war. International attempts to persuade Iraq to withdraw peacefully continued for over six months, but the Iraqi regime persisted in its aggression, leaving no other means but force.

During those long months, the Kuwaiti people, under the yoke of occupation, were subjected to torture. Others Kuwaitis were scattered all around the world, enduring the humiliation of exile. The Iraqi regime was not content with all that: it also practised various types of blackmail, including hostage-taking, thus causing anguish to thousands of families.

Today, while Kuwait has regained its sovereignty and resumed its role in the international community, the dire effects of that aggression are still palpable. It is evident that as a result crimes against humanity were committed, especially environmental crimes, where the Iraqi occupation forces pumped oil into the Gulf in order to destroy marine life in that vital waterway. The deliberate crime of setting fire to Kuwait's oil wells remains living proof of the recklessness with which that regime's aggression was imbued.

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

We applaud the efforts that were, and continue to be exerted by the Government of Kuwait to check the environmental devastation that resulted from the aggression. The Iraqi regime is fully responsible for the destruction of wealth and the wastage of resources resulting from its aggression.

Iraq's continuing detention of thousands of Kuwaiti citizens is a flagrant example of that regime's brutality, of its persistence in violating covenants and obligations and of its defiance of the international will.

My country wishes to see the relevant Security Council resolutions fully implemented in order to ensure that aggression will not recur. In cooperation with fraternal and friendly countries, we in the region seek to set up a mechanism to maintain security and stability, and make the Gulf a safe haven once again. We look forward to the support and cooperation of all of you to attain this lofty goal.

In our tireless endeavour to establish peace and maintain security in the Gulf, we cannot but admit that the security of the Middle East is an integral whole, and is linked to the causes and nature of conflicts in that region, which have been going on for five decades. Right from the outset, we realized that the delicate sensitivity that characterizes regional and international rivalries in the Middle East would inevitably lead to instability, and that it is difficult to separate the security of any one country or group of countries from the region's overall security.

We are pleased with the increasing international recognition of this fact, especially in light of the recent changes on the international scene, because people are now becoming convinced that there is a need to deal expeditiously and effectively with the principal conflict in the Middle East and with the core issue, the Palestinian question. We are hopeful that the

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

current initiative by the American administration will succeed in convening the peace conference.

We believe that making peace will primarily depend on a continuing effort and on overcoming the obstacles Israel is still putting in the way of those endeavours, particularly its continuing building of settlements, which runs counter to the substance of the peace process and to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which call for the implementation of the principle of land for peace to be applied. Also, Israel has laid down stringent conditions regarding Palestinian representation, the status of Jerusalem and the United Nations role in that conference. The only aim of those conditions is to abort efforts to convene the conference so that Israel can shirk its responsibilities as an occupying Power and deny the Palestinian people the exercise of their right to self-determination.

It is therefore imperative for the fundamental principles for making peace to be affirmed; foremost of these is Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem, and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the establishment of their own independent state on their national soil.

In this respect, my delegation commends the recent resolutions adopted by the Palestine National Council. Those resolutions are a manifest expression of the Palestinian desire to respond with the present peace endeavours. We hope that this position will meet the appropriate response from all the parties concerned.

We welcome and support the efforts by the Lebanese Government to extend its sovereignty to all the territory of Lebanon. The President of Lebanon emphasised, in his statement before the General Assembly last week, the need

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to implement Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which provides for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from all occupied Lebanese territory, especially now that the legitimate authority has been able to restore tranquillity and exercise its jurisdiction in all other areas of Lebanon.

For our part, we call on the international community, as represented by the Security Council, to implement that resolution. We also call upon all countries capable of extending a helping hand to do so, so that Lebanon can recover and reconstruct what the war has destroyed. We in the United Arab Emirates are fully willing to play our part in that endeavour, in cooperation with fraternal and friendly countries.

In South Africa, some aspects of the apartheid system have been abolished. These are the Group Areas Act, the Population Registration Act and the Land Acts. While commending the abrogation of those laws, we note that the very basis of the apartheid system itself still exists. Moreover, many other laws that entrench that system have yet to be abrogated.

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Political stability and the continuation of international détente and cooperation are contingent upon the international order's ability to ride out the economic recession that continues to be a hurdle that blocks the entry of many of the world's peoples and countries upon the stage of economic development. A quick review of the performance of the world economy shows the size of the difficulties which face the economies of the developing countries as a result of the imbalance in the terms of trade, the debt crisis, the deteriorating prices of primary commodities and protectionism; also to be considered are the obstacles placed by some industrialized nations in the way of developing countries' exports, their monopolization of modern technology and their marginalization of the developing countries' role in the world economy.

These short-sighted policies contribute significantly to the obstruction of development programmes, which suffer from a shortage of resources and manpower, and are thus conducive to the intensification of economic and social crises. Though we realistically admit that the developing countries themselves bear the responsibility of removing those hurdles, we must admit also that the present international economic order is governed by a set of conditions that frustrate every effort made by those countries, which find themselves hemmed in by conditions and circumstances that are hard to cope with. Hence, the major economic powers have a significant role to play in supporting the efforts of those countries to create a more appropriate international economic climate.

The North-South dialogue, which has to be resumed, still constitutes the necessary starting point. The halting of that dialogue, regardless of the reasons for it, wasted precious time and opportunities for international

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development efforts, and we maintain that efforts must be renewed under the new set of international circumstances and conditions.

In that regard, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in Brazil next year, is a unique and auspicious opportunity for the world community to agree on a new agenda for comprehensive and sustainable international development in the interest of all mankind.

Among the basic lessons to be drawn from the Gulf crisis is the potential for devastation brought about by the acquisition of arms in general and weapons of mass destruction in particular. We all know the horror that could result from the use of such weapons in a highly volatile and extremely sensitive region.

My country has always been in favour of freeing the Middle East from weapons of mass destruction. We support the initiatives and efforts aimed at the prevention of producing, acquiring and stockpiling such weapons, and the destruction of those in stock.

The Israeli military arsenal, with its massive stockpiles of nuclear and chemical weapons still poses a real threat to stability and the prospects of making peace. Events have taught us that the acquisition of a certain weapon by any party provides the justification for others to acquire it. And when possession of such weapons by a State is associated with a policy of aggression, the danger is compounded. We therefore call for speedy action towards instituting the necessary procedures to eliminate such weapons.

On the international level, we welcome the agreements that have been made on arms reduction in Europe, the elimination of stocks of chemical weapons as well as long-range missiles. We hope that efforts and negotiations will continue towards freeing all areas of the world from weapons of mass

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destruction, and we welcome the recent agreement between Brazil and Argentina in this regard.

It is particularly appropriate to applaud the historic initiative taken a few days ago by the President of the United States, in which he announced the removal and elimination of all short-range nuclear weapons on land and sea in Europe and Asia. This initiative is a very advanced step in the process of disarmament and in mutual confidence-building.

The world, which has been able during the last few years to overcome many of the political problems that darkened international relations since the end of World War II and to solve many regional problems, must face up at this juncture to many newly emerging problems, particularly those of the grave degradation of the environment, worsening drug-trafficking and abuse, the problems of human rights and the attainment of social, economic and political justice in many societies.

Mankind should be the focus of our attention, since man is the means of development and the beneficiary of stability. Man's civil rights cannot be separated from his political rights, foremost of which are the right to self-determination and the right of all nations and peoples to enjoy respect for their heritage and culture. The end result of all this is the establishment of international cooperation on the basis of mutual respect in order to achieve well-being and prosperity for all mankind.

Mr. BEN YAHIA (Tunisia) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me pleasure to express, on behalf of my country and on my own behalf, my wholehearted congratulations upon your election as President of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. The strong bonds of brotherhood and close cooperation that exist between Tunisia and the Kingdom of Saudi

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Arabia make us additionally proud of this appropriate choice, which is an expression of the high regard in which the international community holds your brotherly country, which has done its utmost for cooperation among nations. It is, at the same time, a tribute to your knowledge and wisdom, qualities that will be, God willing, of great assistance to us in attaining positive results during this session.

(Mr. Ben Yahia, Tunisia)

I am also pleased to join other speakers in extending to your predecessor, Mr. Guido de Marco, our deepest appreciation for his great services and high competence during his presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session. I should also like to take this opportunity to offer my heartfelt regards and respect to Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, who for 10 years has shouldered the responsibility of the Secretariat of the Organization during one of the most difficult periods ever experienced by the international community. Now that he is getting ready to bring to completion his task at the head of the world Organization, Tunisia would like to assure him of its deep appreciation for his important and tireless efforts on behalf of peace and cooperation among nations.

We also welcome the new Members of our Organization: the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and the Republics of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia. Tunisia views the accession to the membership of the United Nations by the three Baltic Republics as yet another indication of the profound changes that have taken place in the Soviet Union on the basis of respect for the right of peoples to self-determination and adherence to international legality. Such changes could have never taken place were it not for the policy of perestroika pursued by President Mikhail Gorbachev since he assumed the highest post in his country. We are convinced that the Soviet Union will continue to play its constructive role in the service of peace and security in the world.

On the threshold of a new century, the international community is entering upon a delicate and difficult phase characterized principally by the painstaking search for ways and means of establishing a new and more equitable

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world order in which will prevail the lofty values of solidarity among human beings and stability, peace and security for mankind in keeping with the principles of equality and justice. Tunisia, being a peace-loving country that is devoted to the United Nations Charter and its principles and a country that upholds the right of all peoples to live in dignity, has always done its utmost to implement those noble principles both at the national and international levels. I should like to inform the Assembly of some of Tunisia's contributions in this connection since the last session of the General Assembly.

At the national level, Tunisia has continued to strengthen its achievements in building a new society in which human rights will be protected, the principles of freedom, democracy and political plurality will flourish, and the rule of law will prevail. Having become aware early on of the demands of our times, and determined to meet those demands, since the changes that took place on 7 November 1987 Tunisia has declared its commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms. It has undertaken to create the conditions necessary to protect those rights. President Ben Ali's decision in January 1991 to establish the High Commission on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms was further confirmation of our firm commitment in that regard.

We would like to emphasize from this rostrum that this democratic policy is a key change in my country. Without any reservations, Tunisia has ratified the United Nations Convention against torture and was honoured to be chosen to host the Arab Institute for Human Rights. We have also authorized Amnesty International to open an office in Tunisia. Tunisia, which has always condemned all forms of discrimination on the basis of race, faith or gender, and which is a signatory of various United Nations conventions relating to

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human rights, wishes at this time to reaffirm its determination to work tirelessly in order to enrich its legislation and strengthen its institutions concerned with the protection of the citizen's rights and freedoms in every field.

We would like to reaffirm in this connection that our country, which aspires after an open and tolerant society, unambiguously rejects extremism in every shape and form, as we believe that extremism and its attendant bigotries and violence are the worst enemies of human rights, including the right to a secure life and freedom of thought. We sincerely hope that the international community will take note of this, so that we may fight together against this dangerous phenomenon which threatens the very stability of our societies and which finds support and encouragement from certain parties. The international community must militate against such criminal activities.

While progress in any society hinges upon the level of that society's internal stability and peace, we believe that it equally depends on the external environment in international relations as a whole. Hence Tunisia, which strives to ensure social peace and stability so that it may be able to mobilize its resources for its own development, gives a very high priority to the establishment of world peace.

This became obvious in Tunisia's position vis-à-vis the Gulf crisis. While it supported Security Council resolutions and implemented them in full - despite their serious and ongoing negative impact on our economy - it did its utmost to avoid the war and subsequently to end it. We would like to express our deep regret at the crisis, and we hope that the international community will work together in order to eliminate the remaining effects of the war so that stability and peace might be restored in the area on the basis of full respect for international legality.

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In this respect, while affirming our unswerving devotion to international legality and our continuing support for the role of the United Nations in solving world problems, we call upon the international community to take cognizance, for strictly humanitarian reasons, of the suffering of large sectors of the Iraqi people, particularly new-born infants and the elderly, who are adversely affected and suffer undernourishment and a lack of basic health care.

The same humanitarian considerations, as well as our sincere desire to look beyond this painful past, make us follow closely the question of the Kuwaiti prisoners in Iraq. We strongly hope that this question will be solved in a way that would ensure the return of those prisoners to their families as soon as possible, thus allowing the Iraqi and Kuwaiti peoples to open a new era in their relations based on good-neighbourliness and a forward-looking attitude characterized by trust, peace and brotherhood.

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Tunisia, which has supported United Nations peace efforts in various parts of the world by contributing troops to the United Nations missions to the Congo in the 1960s and, more recently, to Namibia, wishes today to reaffirm its commitment to Arab and international efforts to reestablish peace and stability in the Gulf and in all other areas of tension in the world.

My country's devotion to peace is seen also in our ongoing efforts to contribute to the resolution of the Palestinian problem, which remains the core issue in the Middle East conflict. As we firmly support the right of Palestinians freely to make their own decisions, we have encouraged the approach of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) since its declaration of the State of Palestine in 1988, an approach that relies on negotiations as a means of resolving the Palestinian problem.

My country, which hosted the beginnings of the Palestinian-United States dialogue and worked for its success, welcomes today United States and international efforts to convene a peace conference in the Middle East and the positive attitude of the Palestine National Council towards that conference. We reaffirm our readiness to participate in the peace process in the framework of the efforts of the Arab Maghreb Union countries, in such a way as to strengthen our Palestinian brothers and help preserve legitimate Palestinian and Arab rights.

In this respect, we do hope to witness a clearer and more firm determination on the part of the international community to impose peace on all those who create obstacles to peace. While we draw attention to the dangerous consequences of allowing Israel to continue to defy General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on this issue, to pursue its violent acts of repression against the civilian population and to continue its colonization

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policies aimed at imposing a fait accompli, we wish to state that it is our conviction that there can be no just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East unless all parties concerned, including the legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people, participate in the peace process and unless the goal of the process is to recognize all legitimate Palestinian rights and to secure Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories, including the Holy City of Al-Quds.

There is no doubt that a major prerequite of success in Middle East peace efforts is confidence-building among all parties concerned, both before and during the negotiations. We believe, therefore, that the international community should demand that Israel adopt an approach that bespeaks a real desire to go ahead with the peace process, instead of persisting in acts that further complicate a peace process which calls for responsible behaviour, not arrogance and rejection.

In that context, the policy of settlements in the occupied Arab territories, including Al-Quds, a policy Israel relentlessly pursues and even accelerates, is an obstacle to real, equitable peace. The international community should wonder whether Israel's desire for peace is genuine. If Israel wants to demonstrate such a genuine will for peace, it should end its policy of settlements, deportations and repression. That would make mutual trust possible among the parties to the conflict, which could help create a new relationship between Arabs and Israelis. That could, in turn, lead to a new stance on the boycott question, and could accelerate the peace process among all parties concerned.

A just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict places a heavy burden of responsibility on the United

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Nations. We are sure the Organization can shoulder that burden, thereby strengthening its position, increasing its credibility and convincing all Members that United Nations decisions must be implemented. Success in this would undoubtedly enhance the Organization's effectiveness in dealing with other pending issues such as those relating to Cyprus, southern Lebanon, Kashmir and Cambodia, both through ongoing United Nations efforts and through the endeavours of humanitarian organizations whose purpose is to alleviate the suffering of people in those areas.

In that context, we express our satisfaction at the positive developments taking place in various crisis areas, where dialogue and reconciliation are prevailing over violence and anarchy.

We are pleased at the great progress made by brotherly Lebanon towards national unity and stability thanks to the implementation of the Taif agreement, which saved the country from a perilous situation. We wish the Lebanese State full success in building a new peaceful, independent and prosperous Lebanon.

We also support attempts to restore harmony and understanding in Yugoslavia, a friendly country with which we have longstanding relations of cooperation and mutual respect.

We welcome progress towards solving the Cambodian problem. The agreement signed last July at Beijing opens new prospects for restoring peace in the area and for creating a climate of reconciliation and understanding among all Cambodians. This gives them the chance to build a new independent and democratic Cambodia free from foreign intervention. We take this opportunity to convey our friendly greetings to the delegation present in this Hall representing the Supreme National Council of Cambodia, and to its Chairman, Prince Norodom Sihanouk.

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Turning to Afghanistan, my delegation hopes that the Secretary-General's five-point plan of May 1991 will put an end to the suffering of the Afghan people, especially since the agreement has been accepted by all the parties concerned in that country. We believe the talks that began on the basis of that plan should continue with support from the international community in order speedily to reach a final solution to this long-standing problem. In that connection, we welcome the joint decision by the Soviet Union and the United States of America to halt all deliveries of weapons to the parties to the conflict. That constitutes a decisive step forward that will unquestionably help stop the bloodshed.

The positive decision I have just mentioned reminds us once again of the essential role disarmament could play in reducing tension in many parts of the world.

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The armed conflicts witnessed in the Gulf area and the Middle East and the persistence of unresolved problems show that peace and security are still threatened, and that in searching for a better future today's world must consider disarmament as one of its main objectives until a real reduction of all kinds of arms is achieved.

Tunisia, which has always striven to make the Mediterranean a lake of peace and cooperation, notes with interest the efforts made here to achieve disarmament in the Middle East. We hope that such efforts will be carried out in a spirit of justice, and that they will cover all countries of the region and all types of armaments, in order to avoid aggravating the present imbalance, and will thus contribute to the ongoing disarmament process which has started to achieve some encouraging successes in other parts of the world. Indeed, we have witnessed a number of positive steps taken in that direction in the span of one year.

We welcome the important decision announced by President Bush on 27 September on reducing various types of short-range nuclear weapons and other weapons currently deployed on land, at sea and in the air. We hope that this decision will be followed by similar measures by the other nuclear Powers. Moreover, multilateral negotiations on chemical weapons are about to be concluded, and a number of countries have expressed their readiness to become parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty on nuclear weapons.

We also note with satisfaction positive signs in the reduction of defence budgets in favour of development and the environment, as well as the destruction of some existing weapons and the setting up of an effective mechanism for monitoring and on-the-spot inspection.

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While these developments are undoubtedly positive, we must all recognize that the gap between resources spent on armaments and those used for development is still extremely wide and that the existence of huge arsenals all over the world remains a cause of deep concern. That is why we find it useful to consider the proposal for establishing, under the authority of the United Nations, a system for control of the proliferation, production and transfer of all types of weapons.

The establishment of world peace, as well as the strengthening of peace, security and stability the world over, is certainly a necessary condition for the progress and prosperity of mankind. But in our view this would not be enough. There must also be real cooperation between countries, especially at the regional level. Tunisia has been in the forefront of those contributing to this by helping establish the Arab Maghreb Union and ensuring its joint progress towards the attainment of our development expectations.

The last session of the Presidential Council, consisting of Heads of State of members of the Union, which took place in Casablanca, offered our five countries the opportunity to reaffirm their determination to pursue their integration efforts in all fields. The main outcome of the session was the establishment of the institutions of the Union as well as the adoption of a number of important decisions which will undoubtedly contribute to the promotion of cooperation between members of the Union and their neighbours.

Since its inception, the Arab Maghreb Union has given high priority to dialogue with the European Economic Community as a whole and with the four European countries situated on the western shore of the Mediterranean. Our objective in doing so is to establish a new form of relations between Europe and the Maghreb which will contribute to the strengthening of peace, security

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and cooperation in the Mediterranean area as a whole. Tunisia, which will host the summit of the group of nine western Mediterranean countries, scheduled for early next year, is committed to pursue, along with its partners in the Maghreb and Europe, its efforts to ensure the success of this promising dialogue and to contribute to the promotion of North-South cooperation.

Tunisia, which has always wanted to strengthen the Arab role on the international scene, was honoured to host the Arab League for more than 10 years, during which it put at its disposal all possible facilities, allowing it to strengthen its institutions, improve its procedures and efficiency and gain more international credibility. The same sense of responsibility made us respond to the wish of the Arab world - expressed at a time when Arab and world conditions were going through a difficult period - to relocate the League's headquarters from Tunis to Cairo.

Today we cannot but express our satisfaction that this great Arab institution was able - thanks to the collective will of Arab leadership - to overcome the effects of the painful Gulf crisis. Tunisia is working hard to resume Arab collective efforts based on confidence, mutual respect and brotherly cooperation, to further the cause of peace, security and stability in the Arab world and the world at large.

The Gulf crisis, with its effects on the Muslim Umma, showed that this group of countries is able to stand up and preserve its unity, thanks to the real political will of Muslim leaders and the hard work done by the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, efforts which he is continuing in order to build new confidence and open up real possibilities for a new start in collective Muslim action. We hope that the coming summit of Muslim countries in Dakar will offer an opportunity for

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reconciliation and give further impetus to relations between Muslim countries in this important phase of international relations.

Tunisia views with satisfaction the progress made in Africa in seeking solutions to bilateral conflicts, which have been a source of concern to us all. These problems include the question of Western Sahara, which we follow with special attention because of its bearing on security in the Maghreb region and on the future of the Arab Maghreb Union. We are optimistic that a settlement to this problem will be found. Such a settlement will strengthen peace and security in our region and promote cooperation and complementarity between nations in the Maghreb.

As for South Africa, Tunisia, like all other countries, welcomes the abrogation of the apartheid laws. This important development could not have taken place without the international pressure and the economic boycott measures taken against Pretoria. However, it is even more important that this step should be crystallized and made effective in such a way that it becomes felt in everyday life, especially on the political level.

We take pride in the launching of the African Economic Community at the last African Summit held in Abuja.

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We are hopeful that this new and all-embracing framework of South-South cooperation would make it possible for African countries to achieve economic integration in the interest of all our peoples. This would also contribute to consolidating the foundations of justice, solidarity and equality, the two pillars upon which the new international order must rest.

Tunisia, which deeply believes in the importance of international cooperation, is convinced that the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in the international arena requires a parallel strengthing of its role in promoting multilateral economic cooperation. In today's increasingly interdependent world the United Nations must effectively participate in promoting comprehensive and equitable development. The Organization must also intensify constructive consultation on such important matters as customs barriers, indebtedness, the negative transfer of resources and the restrictions imposed on free trade among nations.

In this connection, we believe that the present tendency of solving economic problems on a bilateral basis must not take precedence over the multilateral approach. In this context, Tunisia welcomes the commitment recently made in London by the group of the seven most-industrialized countries to promote the establishment of a world order in which development will be a responsibility shared by all countries of the world.

While changes that are taking place in Eastern and Central Europe have led to the crumbling of the walls and the eradication of obstacles between East and West, they have also thrown into bold relief the differences that exist between rich, industrialized countries, on the one hand, and the impoverished developing world, on the other. It would be regrettable indeed were the attention of the international community to be focused solely on the

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building of bridges of cooperation between East and West. Developing countries, in general, and the countries of Africa, in particular, are well aware of the importance of the changes now taking place in the world economic situation and are fully conscious of their national responsibilities in this context. That is why Tunisia has taken it upon itself, since 7 November 1987, to enhance its credibility vis-à-vis its trading partners, through a series of measures aimed at readjusting its economic and social life. This is an objective we are determined to achieve through the optimum utilization of our disposable resources. Despite the reduction in our external financial resources and the adverse effects of the Gulf crisis, Tunisia is working hard to mobilize all its resources to enhance its economic capabilities. In so doing, it is trying to involve all sectors of society in the development process, with a view to promoting technological progress and the creation of job opportunities. However, we feel that the results of those endeavours, despite all our sacrifice, are still not fully satisfactory owing to the adverse impact of the world economic environment. Still, our confidence in the efficacy of international cooperation will remain as strong as ever.

Five years ago developing countries felt encouraged when the multilateral trade negotiations were launched in Punta del Este with the adoption of the ministerial declaration the Uruguay Round. Indeed, we expected the Round to contribute positively towards putting an end to protectionist tendencies and allowing developing countries to play a more effective role in world trade in a way that would respond to their present and future development needs. We continue to hope that the trade negotiations will lead to concrete, equitable and useful results for both developed and developing countries, for we believe

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that the promotion of multilateral cooperation and reassurance of economic partners throughout the world with regard to the soundness of world trade are essential and urgent tasks that must be performed if we are to ensure a stable and larger flow of world trade.

The forthcoming eighth meeting of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) could, we believe, contribute to attaining some of our common goals, given the necessary political will. Indeed, UNCTAD offers a suitable framework for strengthening world trade in a way that would improve its effectiveness and make it more equitable by allowing developing countries to play a greater role in the decision-making process and to enhance their involvement in world trade. We believe that the restructuring trends we can now observe in Eastern and Central Europe promise the dawning of a new era of cooperation between East and West and, at the same time, between North and South.

The current profound world changes that are taking place on the political, economic and technological levels demand the adoption of a new outlook and an approach based on a comprehensive treatment of various world problems. We must adopt a dialogue based on solidarity and mutual respect as our common rule. That in turn means that all countries must be given equal opportunities, without discrimination or exclusivity.

President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali has called from this very rostrum for the adoption of a pact for peace and development in the world, one that would give concrete form to the principle of effective solidarity between developing and developed countries. While reiterating that proposal, we reaffirm our belief that the United Nations, as the most appropriate forum for dialogue and consultations on the international level, is the best setting for the consideration of this issue.

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Tunisia, which looks forward to the attainment of that far-reaching objective, continues for its part, and in the framework of its own geographic environment, to work towards that goal. It is in this context that we seek the adoption of a programme of cooperation and understanding in the Mediterranean basin on the basis of what we call "co-development". In our view, this is the best way to promote progress and security on both shores of the Mediterranean and the means of narrowing the economic and technological gaps that exist between the Mediterranean countries through the adoption of a resolute policy involving problem-identification and the finding of the means capable of dealing with such problems collectively. We believe that this formula, which can be adopted in other parts of the world as well, cannot be put into effect unless it is accompanied by a number of parallel measures that, in our view, should focus on three basic issues, namely, indebtedness, emigration and environment.

The debt problem which obstructs development, has been seriously aggravated as a result of the deviation of the flow of external resources. I would emphasize here the danger inherent in these factors for the political and social stability of developing countries. We call upon the international community to give serious consideration to the Craxi report, which contains proposals that, we believe, properly express the concerns of our countries in this respect.

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We would certainly be gratified if such proposals were to be accepted and implemented. If that were to be done, the international community will have removed a serious obstacle that obstructs the developing countries' efforts to resume their development and progress.

This session is also called upon to assess the implementation of resolution 214/45, pertaining to the issue of debt and development. In this connection, it would be appropriate for us to examine all ways and means of avoiding the exclusion of any group of developing countries from the benefits of debt relief measures, especially the medium-income group of countries. In this regard, allow me to express again my sincere hope that all our partners will find it possible to give effect to the idea of recycling developing countries' debts into certain agreed development projects. Tnis is an idea that has already begun to be implemented.

Our Organization and its specialized agencies have time and again stressed man's right to live in a proper environment free from any kind of pollution. This leads Tunisia to give particular importance to environment protection and preservation at both the national and the regional levels. We believe that this is an issue that must be given special priority in any serious vision of the new world order. We do hope that the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 in Brazil will be successful in formulating a plan which the world must put into effect to protect future generations from the dangers of tampering with the delicate natural balances and over-utilization of our finite resources.

We are today at the threshold of a new world order whose shape and objectives we must all help define. Tunisia hopes to bring its contribution, through its continuous efforts to consolidate world peace and international

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cooperation and through its modest inputs in the search for solutions to current problems. Let me emphasize once again that development, security and peace are dependent on dialogue and consultation at the international level. This will require from all of us strict adherence to the United Nations Charter and wholehearted commitment to its goals and objectives. What is at stake today is the very future of mankind. That future can be ensured only through real solidarity.

This conviction leads Tunisia to nurture the hope that the United Nations will focus most firmly on development problems, thus allowing all nations to join efforts for the common purpose of achieving everlasting peace and security for all, these being the basis for any human progress.

I thank you for your kind attention, and I present to you again my greetings and those of my country, Tunisia.

Mr. TRAN QUANG CO (Viet Nam) (interpretation from French): Sir, the delegation of Viet Nam wishes to congratulate you upon your election to the presidency of the United Nations General Assembly at its forty-sixth session. We are confident that under your guidance the current session will successfully discharge its eminent duty.

I should like on this same occasion to convey our very high appreciation for the vast efforts exerted by the Secretary-General of our Organization, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, on behalf of peace and cooperation among nations. Such achievements assume even more significance in view of the powerful and complex changes the world is undergoing.

We extend warm greetings to the delegations of the new Member States that have joined us this year, namely, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the

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Marshall Islands, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Lithuania. It is with particular pleasure that we welcome the presence in our midst of the delegation of the Supreme National Council of Cambodia, representing Cambodia and its people and led by H.R.H. Prince Norodom Sihanouk.

We are living through the early years of the last decade of the twentieth century, which are witnessing the most powerful and far-reaching developments since the Second World War. The world at present offers an overall picture of serious contradictions. On the one hand, mankind is enjoying the fruits of the tremendous advances in the contemporary scientific and technical revolutions; on the other, hundreds of millions of human beings in developing countries are being crushed by poverty and squalour.

Following seven or eight years of recovery, the world economy is now confronted with the possibility of a new recession. International economic relations are characterized by a certain degree of confusion. Regional conflicts are being successively settled through peaceful negotiations; there is a growing trend towards international cooperation in peaceful coexistence for the sake of development; and new progress continues to be made towards the reduction of nuclear weapons; nevertheless, the nightmare of war still haunts humanity. The Gulf war has hardly come to a close, leaving in its wake a host of ensuing problems to be solved in the Middle East, when the seeds of other conflicts continue to grow or are starting to grow in various parts of the world.

In a world in full-scale transition, where the basic factors underlying the international order of the past 45 years have radically changed, a new international order is bound to take shape. This is a reality with which

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every member of the world community, especially among developing countries, is concerned, inasmuch as it will strongly affect the vital interests of each nation-State on our globe as well as the future of the development of the whole of mankind. Some will raise the possibility of a unipolar world, while others evoke the prospect of a multipolar world. It can, however, be readily asserted that the primary imperative of nations is to preserve peace and national independence and to promote cooperation towards development. The peoples of the world are moved by a most intense desire for peace, cooperation and development.

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It is our view that in the shaping of the new world order such a legitimate will and desire cannot be ignored and that it is indispensable to take into account the forceful resolve of each State, large or small, to defend its right to be master of its own national destiny and to participate on an equal footing in common world affairs and in the major issues within its own region. The world needs a more just and saner new international order. A definitive end must be put to all forms of hegemony, of military, political or economic intervention or coercion by large countries against smaller ones, by the minority at the expense of the majority. Nations need to cooperate freely on an equal footing and to mutual advantage for the common cause of peace and development.

One of the major concerns of the international community is the imperative need for economic development. The fierce economic and scientific and technological race that is taking place around the world is widening the gap between developed industrial nations and developing countries. The latter are still battling with a series of detrimental factors: the dwindling flow of resources from developed industrial countries; the increasingly heavier foreign debt burden; the strengthening of protectionist barriers by some industrial countries; the decline in primary commodity prices; the lack of encouragement for the efforts of developing countries to promote South-South or regional cooperation. As a result, the economies of these countries are steadily deteriorating, with a very negative impact on the whole of the world economy and on international economic relations. Meanwhile, the Uruguay Round and the Group of Seven meeting have failed to bring about any positive change in the international economic order, which remains unfair. Together with the other developing countries, we call on the developed industrial nations to put

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a rapid end to the policy of economic blockade and pressure, to renounce unequal economic relations and to create an international economic environment that is favourable to third world development. The United Nations ought to adopt even more active and effective measures to help developing countries overcome these difficulties, so as to achieve the economic aims of the International Development Strategy for the United Nations Fourth Development Decade (1991-2000).

Given the shift in the bipolar alignment of political and military forces across the world, multilateralism assumes an even more enhanced position than before. The United Nations, the largest international organization encompassing the near totality of the States of the world, will become the ideal place for countries to carry out their policy of broadened and diversified relations and to build for themselves as well as for their respective regions a political balance that is both flexible and durable. During the forty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly last year a sizeable number of delegations spoke of a revitalized United Nations now in a position to effectively discharge its mission under the Charter and thereby to rid itself of the powerlessness and pessimism that used to mar its image at the time of its fortieth anniversary in 1985. United Nations activities and contributions over the past year have, however, demonstrated both the possibilities and the limits of the role it can play in the settlement of regional conflicts and crises.

A reform of the United Nations is necessary if it is to adapt to the new world circumstances and to live up to the expectations of the larger number of its Member States as underlined by Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar in his annual report on the work of the Organization, where he expresses

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"the hope that the unity of the permanent members of the Security Council will be complemented by a balanced constitutional relationship within and between the various principal organs" (A/46/1, p. 20)

and says that two years ago, in his annual report in 1989, he had stressed that

"agreement among the permanent members must carry with it the willing support of a majority of nations if it is to facilitate movement towards a better and a saner world. Events since then have lent emphasis to that observation." (ibid.)

We share the viewpoint of many countries which think that the United Nations mechanism should be further improved as far as the structure and the functioning of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretariat as well as a more balanced interrelationship among these organs are concerned. This would allow the United Nations to become an efficient instrument in the settlement of international problems and in particular to provide encouragement for and support to interested parties and regions in the solution of existing crises and in the prevention of new crises on the basis of respect for the independence and sovereignty of nations and for the Charter of the Organization. In view of the changing world there can be no reason why the United Nations should be considered an immutable institution. We are of the opinion that today all Members of our vast Organization share a common wish to promote the role and effectiveness of the United Nations but still differ on the scope of the reforms needed to increase democracy within the Organization and the ways and means of carrying them out. The developing countries, and essentially the non-aligned nations, believe that

"The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, which represents the majority of States and peoples of the world, must play a more important and more

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concrete role in the restructuring of the new international system if the latter is to be legitimate and acceptable." (Accra Declaration)

In our view the United Nations should be able to readjust itself according to the general world trend so as to become a more dynamic and representative world body.

In our nation's endeavour to achieve peace, development, democracy and social progress, the year 1991 assumes very great significance. On the strength of a positive balance-sheet in the main fields after a few years of implementation, Viet Nam has reasserted the necessary and irreversible nature of its policy of all-round reform and renewal charted since 1986 with a view to focusing on the solution of pressing economic and social problems and maintaining political stability while rearranging the various spheres of social life in consonance with Viet Nam's characteristics. Such reassertion acquires even greater practical and realistic significance in the new world conjuncture and constitutes a pressing, not to say vital, objective requirement for our people.

The phasing out of the bipolar world is entailing for all countries the need to diversify their political and economic relations so as to be able to take advantage of all existing opportunities and possibilities to serve the cause of the nation and at the same time to wrest for themselves a new position of flexible as well as durable balance that constantly allows for self-readjustment according to the evolution of the whole.

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If the balanced diversification of external relations represents an overall objective trend in the new conjuncture, in the case of Viet Nam, a developing country still battling with countless difficulties, this constitutes a crucial priority in its current foreign policy which should enable it to move out of the crisis and resolutely to tackle the task of development. Viet Nam's foreign policy aims at promoting cooperation on an equal footing for the mutual benefit with all countries, regardless of their socio-economic systems and on the basis of the principles of peaceful coexistence. From this rostrum, Viet Nam once again solemnly declares its intention to extend the hand of friendship to all countries in the international community and its commitment to work for peace, national independence and development.

The interests of Viet Nam, as a developing country in South-East Asia, are closely linked to those of the region. With the purpose of shaping for itself an international environment favourable to peace and development and of putting its open-door policy and the diversification of its relations of international cooperation into practice in an effective way, Viet Nam pays particular attention to the constant improvement of its relations of friendship and cooperation with regional and neighbouring countries and to making a positive contribution to the cause of a stable, friendly and cooperative South-East Asia.

We are highly gratified to see the recent positive developments in South-East Asia and, in particular, the prospect of a peaceful settlement of the Cambodian question in a spirit of national reconciliation among Cambodians. The attendance of the delegation of the Supreme National Council of Cambodia for the first time at a session of the United Nations General

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Assembly, and the agreements reached among the Cambodian parties at the recent meetings of the Supreme National Council on the internal aspects of a solution to the Cambodian question are new and important steps in the process of restoring peace in Cambodia that make the reconvening of the Paris International Conference on Cambodia possible. These results are eloquent testimony to the fact that Cambodians are fully able to resolve matters pertaining to their sovereignty in a spirit of national reconciliation with the support and cooperation of countries concerned and of the United Nations. Viet Nam reiterates its principled position whereby it will respect any decision of the Supreme National Council of Cambodia on all questions pertaining to Cambodian sovereignty. As for itself, after its unilateral withdrawal of all its forces from Cambodia since late in 1989 in the absence of a peaceful settlement, Viet Nam is ready to join efforts with parties concerned in order to reach a comprehensive, fair and reasonable political solution for the Cambodian question based on respect for the Cambodian people's sovereignty and right to self-determination and on respect for the Charter of the United Nations, thereby allowing Cambodia to become a peaceful, independent and neutral country that will contribute to peace, stability and development in South-East Asia and in the world.

Against the background of a forthcoming solution to the Cambodian problem, of the notable improvement in relations between Viet Nam and the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and of the evolution of the normalization process between Viet Nam and China in a direction favourable to regional peace and stability, Viet Nam believes that the countries of South-East Asia now have a better opportunity than ever to build together a region of peace, stability, cooperation and development after several decades of conflict and confrontation.

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The compounded impact of the trend towards unification of the world market, of the speed and force of the scientific and technological revolution, of the movement towards regional integration in several parts of the world and of the perspective of changes in the military presence and the involvement in this region of various Powers makes it necessary to "re-think" South-East Asia through a new approach, new avenues and within a new context, and for countries in the region not only to support one another in the common endeavour of socio-economic development, but also to consult with one another with a view to finding appropriate ways and means for the establishment of a new regional security - all-round security, of which economic development is the primary component. On 10 September, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam addressed to the secretariat, the Chairman of the Standing Committee and the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN an official request for accession to the 1976 Bali Treaty, wherein Viet Nam expressed its desire to strengthen relations of amity, good-neighbourliness and mutually beneficial cooperation with ASEAN countries so as to build a South-East Asia of peace, stability, friendship and cooperation and thus to make a contribution to the cause of peace and development in the world.

Guided by our position of renewal in foreign policy, we are constantly aware of the need to promote regional cooperation as an indispensable premise in the implementation of our policy of expanding our relations of international cooperation and of consolidating the relations we have had up to now with friendly countries and with non-aligned countries, together with the need to broaden cooperation on an equal footing and on the basis of mutual benefit with other countries in Asia and the Pacific, in Western Europe and Scandinavia, and to promote the normalization of relations with the United States.

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Proceeding from our evaluation of initial results in our policy of reform and renewal, of our country's rich potential in natural resources and manpower, of the development trend of our times and of our people's aspirations, Viet Nam has set for its strategy of socio-economic development to the year 2000 the following objectives: to move out of the crisis, stabilize the socio-economic situation, strive to take Viet Nam out of its state of poverty and underdevelopment, improve the people's conditions of life, consolidate our defence and security and pave the way for our country to be able to develop faster in the beginning of the twenty-first century. We are convinced that, given our will and determination and with the cooperation of the international community, we shall be able to reach that objective and, as an active Member of the United Nations, to contribute increasingly to the common cause of peace and development.

Mr. AL-KHATER (Qatar) (interpretation from Arabic): Sir, at the outset I take pleasure in congratulating you on your election to the presidency of the forty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly. This election is a token of appreciation both to your person and to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia which is a founding Member of this world Organization and continued to be a fervent supporter of its objectives. The role that the Kingdom plays in the area of Arab and Islamic affairs, being the host country to the Secretariat of the Islamic Conference Organization and the Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council, are indications of the significance of your having been elected to the presidency of the current session of the General Assembly. We are confident that your leadership of this session will

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effectively contribute to the realization of the goals to which the international community is looking forward.*

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* Mr. Al-Khussaiby (Oman), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Al-Khater, Qatar)

I take pleasure, too, in commending Mr. Guido de Marco, the President of the forty-fifth session, for the efficient manner, the capability and wisdom with which he conducted the affairs of that session.

I should also like to express our appreciation and thanks to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his unstinting efforts to achieve peace, security and the well-being of all the peoples of the world under difficult international conditions.

It is only fair to record here that the Secretary-General has striven earnestly to restore to the Organization its credibility and effectiveness in its role as the guarantor of international peace and security.

My delegation welcomes the admission to membership of the Organization of the Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia. We hope that their accession to the membership of the United Nations will contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of the world body.

The work of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly is being conducted in a new international climate in which the credibility of the United Nations in dealing with crises and conflicts which threaten peace and security has been enhanced. This in turn has led to confirming the faith of the peoples of the world in the importance of the world body and the effectiveness of its role in preserving the peace and security of the world.

This development was particularly evident during the Gulf crisis, in which the world Organization undertook the most decisive role, which resulted in reversing aggression and returning legitimacy to the sister State of Kuwait under the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The fact that the permanent Members of the Security Council acted unanimously to reverse aggression restored to the Council the fullness of its

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authority in preserving world peace and security. This development presages a new era in international relations and a continued effective role for the Security Council, thanks to the concord between the great Powers.

The responsibility for removing the remaining hotbeds of tension and conflict in the many parts of the world is that of the Security Council. It is highly desirable that the Council should persevere along the lines of its action in response to the Gulf war and resolve with the same positive approach the remaining international problems, foremost among which is that of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict which has continued for far too long and which can be settled fairly and justly through the application of the principles of the Charter and the relevant resolutions, in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). As far as we are concerned, the Palestinian cause is at the forefront of our preoccupations. This problem cannot be resolved without recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. Similarly, the Security Council is called upon to implement its resolution 425 (1978), which called upon Israel to withdraw its forces from all Lebanese territory.

We are fully confident that the Security Council has every intention of fully implementing all its resolutions with regard to the Middle East conflict, the Gulf conflict and other problems of the world in the same determined spirit which characterized the implementation of its resolutions on the Iraqi act of aggression against the State of Kuwait.

The events of August of last year confronted the Arab States of the Gulf region with their collective responsibility to preserve peace there and to ensure their territorial integrity. Those States have determined unanimously to work out, in participation with some other Arab and friendly nations,

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security arrangements that would ensure the non-recurrence of what happened last year.

My country welcomes the serious and untiring efforts of the United States of America to reach a resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. We commend the joint call of the United States and the Soviet Union to convene a peace conference on the Middle East. We look forward to the convening of that conference on time and to its success in establishing in the region a stable peace based on justice and equal treatment. Only thus can the peoples of the region live in peace and strive towards the realization of the hopes of development, progress and well-being, which they all share.

The remarkable recent developments on the world scene have resulted in radical changes in international relations and are truly among the most important developments we have witnessed in modern history. For the first time since the end of the Second World War, the nations of the world have realized that they share the same destiny and that the concept of collective security is indivisible and requires adequate common security mechanisms to deal with the political, economic and social problems which still confront our world.

The peoples of the world look forward to the formulation of a new world order that brings peace to the world on the basis of the rules of international law and the principles of justice, equality, cooperation, tolerance and fraternal relations. However, the new world order must avoid the negative aspects of the old order, which resulted in the formation of competing blocs and in polarization and which impeded international action in the fight against poverty, hunger, ignorance and disease in many parts of the world.

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The framework of the new world order must also include international cooperation in trade, in economic development, in disarmament, in dealing with the problem of third-world indebtedness, in the preservation of the environment and in the resolution of social problems. As the new world order it intended to govern all political, economic or social international relations, all the nations of the world have to participate on an equal footing in its formulation, so that it will be a truly universal, just and fair order.

However, in the dawn of this new era of détente in international relations, we must recognize the fact that there are still intractable regional disputes which may not threaten international peace and security but are nevertheless obstacles on the road to the peace which all the world's people should enjoy in this post-cold-war era.

My country strongly encourages and appreciates the efforts of the United Nations and its Secretary-General in reaching solutions to these persistent regional disputes.

The international community still faces an ongoing arms race, compounded by the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons in an increasing number of countries.

In my country's view, the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons poses a danger that is in no way less than the danger posed by nuclear weapons. We therefore call upon the international community to reach agreement on the prevention of the manufacture, possession and proliferation of chemical and biological weapons. Speaking of the danger posed by those weapons leads us to the topic of general disarmament. My country wishes to voice its satisfaction at the progress achieved in the area of disarmament, including conventional weapons.

(Mr. Al-Khater, Qatar)

Here we must commend the recent initiative of President Bush aimed at effecting major reductions in nuclear arms. We hope that other nuclear powers will follow suit and emulate the United States.

The positive developments we are now witnessing in international relations will enhance the collective efforts being made in the area of economic and social development. There is undoubtedly a close link between the rates of economic growth and disarmament. Any progress towards disarmament will create positive opportunities for accelerating the process of economic development.

The problem of external debts which have overburdened the developing nations has impeded the progress of those countries towards achieving the goal of a better life for their peoples. This problem, as well as that of the terms of trade and the problem of transfer of technology to developing countries must be dealt with so that such problems may no longer obstruct and frustrate development efforts in the developing countries.

The problems of environmental pollution are a source of great concern to my country. We look forward to the convening of the United Nations Conference on Development and Environment to be held in Brazil next year. My country is all the more concerned because the Gulf war has aggravated the problems of the environment in our region due to the setting on fire of the oil wells, the resultant pollution of air and water and the threat to marine biology in the whole area of the Gulf. Similarly, the dumping of dangerous wastes and toxic materials in the developing countries has negative implications for the efforts of those countries in the areas of environment preservation and economic development.

We view with great satisfaction the international community's interest in social problems. My delegation is very much concerned at the increase in drug

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abuse by young people. We support all international efforts aimed at fighting drug abuse and hope that those efforts will lead to positive results.

Last year's unfolding of events augured well for a new epoch in international relations. It behoves the international community to seize the opportunity of détente to grapple effectively with the numerous challenges posed by ignorance, poverty, backwardness and the deterioration of the environment. Then, and only then, will the lofty principles of justice, freedom and the equality of nations prevail and true peace and security for all the peoples of the world finally achieved.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting.

(spoke in English)

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. CORDOVEZ (Ecuador) (interpretation from Spanish): In this lofty world body and in the regional forums that have dealt with the question, Ecuador has always expressed its abiding commitment to peace and its constant desire to overcome the problems between Ecuador and Peru. In so doing, Ecuador has been faithful to the yearnings for peace on which relations between States are based and must be based and has sought to contribute to the climate of trust and cooperation which is the key to Latin American integration.

(Mr. Cordovez, Ecuador)

Regarding the statement made by Mr. Torres y Torres Lara, the Foreign Minister of Peru, let me first refer briefly to the episode which, since last August, has led to tensions between the two countries in an area where Ecuador and Peru have had different interpretations of a ruling on the de facto line mentioned in the 1942 Rio de Janeiro Protocol.

The two Governments faced the problem in a spirit in keeping with two countries determined to maintain their friendly relations. Thus we arrived at an agreement that would remove tensions. The first phase has been implemented; but there are two other steps to be taken to establish a security zone.

Ecuador has expressed its willingness to respect that agreement and we consider it unacceptable for Peru to introduce additional issues to those included in the agreement freely accepted by the two Governments.

Our position has been clear. The agreement reached by Ecuador and Peru, through their Foreign Ministers, must be allowed to take its course either directly between the two countries or through the good offices of the four countries signatories to the Brasilia Declaration, dated 15 September 1991, which have offered their cooperation to help find a solution and, in a context of friendship and understanding, thus eliminate existing tensions.

Public opinion, the political parties and the mass media in Ecuador have throughout this episode remained unruffled, in contrast with the bellicose and openly hostile statements emanating from Peru. The Government, people, the National Congress and the armed forces of Ecuador have acted in a peaceful and straightforward manner, secure in the knowledge that reason is on our side.

I reaffirm here before the United Nations General Assembly Ecuador's resolve to comply with the agreement to remove tensions entered into with Peru, and I emphasize the need for the two Governments to follow what it

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stipulates. To attempt to introduce other elements and even get involved in threats of military action against an Ecuadorian military post which for more than 15 years has existed north of the area of tensions would indicate that Peru does not want to comply with the agreement and would try to replace dialogue with the use of force. This would constitute a clear-cut decision to break the peace. Ecuador has the right to denounce it in this Organization, whose basic task is the preservation of peace and security.

I must also refer to the long-standing territorial dispute which is an obstacle to friendship between Ecuador and Peru. It will not disappear just because Peru insists on denying its existence. The Torre Tagle Foreign Office's statement today has been made a thousand times. The International Court of Justice, with its full moral and legal authority, has declared that this dispute is a disagreement on a point of law or of fact, a contradiction of legal theory or of interests. The mere fact that the existence of a litigation is in dispute does not prove that the litigation does not exist. So long as this problem exists, justice and reason will be at stake.

(Mr. Cordovez, Ecuador)

Thus Ecuador wishes to reiterate that this dispute should be settled once and for all in a peaceful, just, honourable and realistic manner so that the two Latin American countries, which have so many links and ties, may find a solution in keeping with the legitimate rights and interests of all sides, and excluding bitterness and mistrust, as other countries in the region have done, thus setting an example.

Ecuador's position was clearly stated by President Rodrigo Borja just a few hours ago from this very rostrum. His statement reflects the Latin American position in favour of peace, its faith in the law and in the authority of His Holiness, Pope John Paul II. President Borja suggested that we should be in step with the world, a world characterized by unilateral disarmament declarations and by unprecedented bilateral and multilateral relations, a world in which Jews, Arabs and Palestinians are agreeing to consider the ways and means of negotiation - in sum, a world in which all obstacles to international coexistence are being removed.

The Ecuadorian proposal means turning over a new leaf so that, aware of the dangers of social instability and the urgent need to protect our democracies, we cease wasting efforts and resources, and devote ourselves fully to solving the most pressing problems plaguing our societies.

What we are saying is: let us resolve our differences once and for all and, to this end, let us submit all relevant legal instruments and antecedents for an objective, authorized, binding decision. Then all our arguments will serve a purpose, thus providing a useful basis for analysing our differences of opinion regarding these antecedents and instruments.

Let us forgo the kind of rhetoric we have used for the past 50 years and open our minds to new approaches for a solution. Let there be an end to only

(Mr. Cordovez, Ecuador)

a few politicians benefiting from this dispute in their attempt to create political platforms. May common sense, realism, sobriety and a vision of the future more in keeping with our times prevail.

President Borja's proposal must be understood in its clearly peaceful, friendly and constructive approach. It is an appeal to understanding, dialogue and concerted action. Hence, I call on Peru once again so that, in a constructive spirit and for peace, we may begin the search for a solution to our territorial dispute, understanding the need to overcome our differences peacefully in order to initiate an era of harmony that will enable us to join efforts in creating a fruitful relationship between our two countries.

Mr. TORRES y TORRES LARA (Peru) (interpretation from Spanish): The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ecuador, Mr. Diego Cordovez, has referred to various points in the statement we delivered this morning. However, he has added a new aspect: he is requesting that Peru comply with the commitment of détente the two Ministers for Foreign Affairs adopted with a view to resolving a specific problem concerning two boundary posts located around 20 kilometres apart.

Allow me to begin by stating that Peru always complies with its commitments. Therefore, I should like the record to reflect that, as always, we are prepared to comply with the commitment we have assumed.

To this should be added - and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ecuador failed to make this point - that new facts have emerged requiring the parties to interpret them so as to ensure the most effective implementation of the agreement. Indeed, we had agreed to repair one boundary post - Cusumasa-Bumbuisa. However, it could not be found, that is to say, it does not physically exist.

(Mr. Torres y Torres Lara, Peru)

I should like to point out that the only way of entering the area in which the boundary post is located is through the Ecuadorian side. Moreover, Ecuador has repeatedly maintained that such boundary posts are covered by a non-existent protocol. Hence, both facts are proof that Ecuador does not recognize what is indeed our border.

There is yet another fact: the perforation or hole presented as the site of the boundary post does not correspond to the proper location, which shows that there is, once again, a difference of views.

Although the Minister of Ecuador stated his country's decision to re-establish the boundary post, they do not want to do it with the required formalities or by an action in full compliance with the requirements of the Rio de Janeiro Protocol.

If we add to these facts the statements made by the Minister to the media, denying the existence or validity of the Protocol that refers to this boundary post, repairing or replacing the post would lose all its legal value. Yesterday, the President of the Republic of Ecuador failed to refer to the Rio de Janeiro Protocol, which is the legal basis for establishing the border. There is thus a contradiction on the Ecuadorian side between the act of restoring the boundary post and its statements regarding its non-recognition of the Rio de Janeiro Protocol.

Furthermore, it has been ascertained in recent weeks that the Ecuadorian post "Teniente Ortiz" would be located within the possible security zone that has been considered by the two Ministers. If that is the case, it would be essential to remove that post as well, so as to demilitarize the zone in keeping with the agreement adopted by the two Ministers.

(Mr. Torres y Torres Lara, Peru)

If the essential point of the agreement was to achieve détente and to establish a confrontation-free zone, the military posts of the two countries must be removed from that zone.

(Mr. Torres y Torres Lara, Peru)

The second point made by the Foreign Minister was that the Protocol presents problems because the parties are not in agreement. In this regard, we must point out that those who signed the Rio de Janeiro Protocol, which provides a final determination of the border between Peru and Ecuador - in other words, Ecuador, Peru and the guarantor countries - are the only parties that may refer to the document. In this connection, Ecuador is the only party that appears to disregard the validity of this legal document. For Peru the document is absolutely valid; for Brazil it is absolutely valid; for Argentina, Chile and the United States, as guarantor countries, it is absolutely valid. It appears that Ecuador - unilaterally, in opposition to the other five countries - wants the option to judge whether or not the document is valid. Recently - on 15 September 1991 - the guarantor countries made a statement calling upon Ecuador and Peru to continue along the lines of the Rio Protocol.

Problems cannot be allowed to arise because one party unilaterally assumes the option to decide that a document is null and void or simply does not exist. Hence, the Rio de Janeiro Protocol is fully valid legally and cannot be made null and void simply because one of the parties says so.

The Foreign Minister of Ecuador says that he has faith in the law, but he forgets that faith in the law is based on compliance with agreements that have been entered into. Ecuador signed the Rio de Janeiro Protocol, its Congress adopted the Protocol, and its representatives ratified the act. All of this must be said.

Another thing: in accordance with the Protocol, 95 per cent of the border - almost 600,000 kilometres - was demarcated. For eight full years implementation of the Protocol did not present any problem. Every marker was

(Mr. Torres y Torres Lara, Peru)

put in its proper location, under the signatures of Peru and Ecuador. However, when only 5 per cent of the border remained to be demarcated, comments were made. The only valid observations that could be made would be comments by Peru against Ecuador for its failure to live up to its commitments and delaying the placing of the markers for the last 5 per cent.

The Foreign Minister of Ecuador mentioned some possible political problems. I think there may be some problems, but they originated in Ecuador. Regrettably, Ecuador has for many years been giving its children and young people false information concerning the Rio de Janeiro Protocol. It is teaching its children and young people completely false geography. As a result, in Ecuador, when elections are on the horizon, the parties, in the course of their campaigns, drag out the issue of the Protocol. That is what we have to denounce: to try to justify its political bases before this international Organization is to try to internationalize a domestic problem.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of Ecuador, who wishes to speak a second time in exercise of the right of reply. The intervention is limited to five minutes.

Mr. CORDOVEZ (Ecuador) (interpretation from Spanish): I do not believe that this is the appropriate forum in which to embark upon a debate on a lot of details, including a number of technical details, which could very well be discussed along the lines proposed by President Borja. I should like, however, to clarify some points made in the last statement of the Peruvian Foreign Minister.

When the representatives of Argentina, Colombia, Chile and the United States met they asked us - the two countries involved - to overcome the tensions that had arisen in relation to a specific area. They asked us also

(Mr. Cordovez, Ecuador)

to make progress in the implementation of the détente agreement. The Foreign Minister of Peru mentioned a point that did indeed arise during those talks. However, we were quite ready to solve this matter. I have referred to the détente agreement. Clearly that is a most urgent issue between our countries.

The only conclusion that we can draw from the last statement of the Foreign Minister of Peru is that there seems to be an intrinsic contradiction in the position of his Government: this morning he said that there were now no problems, that all the problems between our countries had been overcome and settled. The only thing he does in speaking this way is to emphasize the wisdom and validity of the suggestion made by the President of Ecuador in this very forum yesterday.

We hold different positions on a series of problems, including that of the Rio de Janeiro Protocol of 1942, but we want to resolve those differences. We want to discuss our differences, which, according to the Foreign Minister of Peru, have already been solved or could readily be solved through some machinery. But the machinery has not served this purpose in the last 50 years. What we want is to find ways and means of resolving the differences. I fully agree that in certain areas there are fundamental differences, but the Government of Peru said this morning that there were no differences.

Once again I make an appeal: we should ensure that the détente agreement is complied with as its purpose is to resolve an urgent problem.

The post - Lieutenant Ortiz - mentioned by the Foreign Minister of Peru has been there for 15 years; its existence was not discovered in the course of these talks. The only point that emerged during the talks is the lack of a

(Mr. Cordoves, Ecuador)

marker. We have said that we are ready to put the marker back in place, as it is part of the détente agreement. Let us not, however, get sidetracked or try to prolong these talks and these difficulties by linking them with the settlement of other problems, which must be settled in an atmosphere of calm and tranquillity. These are basic problems, basic differences, that we are ready to discuss, as civilized nations are doing at this time. We believe that dialogue is what can help us.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of Peru, who wishes to speak a second time in exercise of the right of reply. The intervention is limited to five minutes.

Mr. TORRES y TORRES LARA (Peru) (interpretation from Spanish): I wish to point out here that the Foreign Minister of Ecuador, in his statement, has once again failed to tell the whole truth. In their recent statement, the countries guarantors of the Rio de Janeiro Protocol urged the parties to take all necessary measures to secure the peaceful settlement of the problem - including the immediate removal of all military personnel with a view to avoiding the possibility of confrontation or bloodshed.

Ecuador's establishment of a military post in that area, which may be a security zone, calls for compensation, according to the agreement.

(Mr. Torres y Torres Lara, Peru)

If Peru is to remove its military forces, then Ecuador must remove its forces from the same area, beginning with the Lieutenant Ortiz post, which is supposed to be located within the security zone. Foreign Minister Cordovez has just insisted again that there are border problems, and he feels there are border problems because we are engaged in a discussion. We have indeed embarked upon a discussion, but it relates to the fact that Ecuador does not want to abide by the mandate of law, the mandate of the Protocol, the mandate of its pledged word. We also are prepared to negotiate. Dialogue has been an open and constant policy of the Foreign Ministry throughout the Republic's history. But it must be dialogue in conformity with the law. In this case the dialogue must occur in accordance with clauses V and VII of the Rio de Janeiro Protocol, which clearly state that any questions that may arise about the interpretation or implementation of the Protocol should be dealt with under the terms of clause VII of that document - that is, with the participation of the guarantor countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile and the United States.

We too make an appeal - an appeal to Ecuador to make its actions fit the law. In this case, it means that, in keeping with the principles and norms of international relations, Ecuador should make its actions fit strict compliance with the Rio de Janeiro Protocol.

For those reasons, in this lofty international forum we call upon and appeal to our sister Republic of Ecuador to solve any problem that it believes still exists in regard to fixing the specific points and markers that are missing in that 5 per cent of the border. In this framework, and in the specific case of the tension that has arisen between the Cusumasa-Bumbuis and Yaupi-Santiago boundary markers, Peru formally calls upon Ecuador to resolve

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this situation peacefully through the application of the verdict of the Brazilian arbitrator Dias de Aiar, which, in relation to this sector of the border, is recorded in clauses IV, V and VI of the Act of 18 August 1948 of the Mixed Border Demarcation Commission.

To sum up, we reaffirm our desire to engage in a dialogue under the Rio de Janeiro Protocol - which is fully valid - with the guarantees provided by the guarantor countries.

The meeting rose at 6.45 p.m.